

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 05841 231430Z

44

ACTION EB-07

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SUBJECT: RESUMED EIGHTH SESSION OF UNCTAD COMMITTEE ON COMMODITIES

1. THE SECOND PART EIGHTH SESSION OF COMMITTEE ON COMMODITIES OPENED JULY 21 WITH CHADHA (INDIA) PRESIDING. FIRST TWO DAYS CHARACTERIZED BY NO CONFRONTATIONAL INTERFACE BETWEEN G-77 AND GROUP B COUNTRIES. TENOR OF MEETINGS HAS BEEN FRIENDLY AND TECHNICAL IN NATURE. UNUSUAL CHARACTER OF SECOND MEETING OF COMMITTEE HAS LED TO BAFFLEMENT ON PART ON SECRETARIAT AND PRESIDENT ON HOW TO ORGANIZE DISCUSSION OF TOPICS, AND LACK OF ANY REAL AGENDA HAS EVOKED LAMQUID DEBATE WITH RELATIVELY FEW DELEGATES INTERVENING. PART OF THE DIFFICULTY IS RESULT OF EXTREMELY LATE DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTATION TO MEMBERS TO THE POINT WHERE SOME TRANSLATED VERSIONS ARE STILL NOT AVAILABLE.

2. OF THE FEW G-77 DELEGATIONS WHICH HAVE SPOKEN, ALL ENDORSED SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COMMODITY PROGRAM.

SPECIAL PLEAS TO INCLUDE PERISHABLE PRODUCTS WITHIN PROGRAM VOICED BY INDIA AND ECUADOR. ALGERIAN STATEMENT WAS
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 05841 231430Z

VERY MILD AND EXCLUSIVELY REPETITION OF WELL-WORN THEMES.

MALAYSIA QUESTIONED DESIRABILITY OF EXPORT TAX TO HELP
FINANCE INTEGRATED PROGRAM AND SRI LANKA RAISED DOUBTS
ON SAME MATTER.

3. ONLY GROUP B COUNTRIES SPEAKING IN PLENARY SESSIONS
HAVE BEEN SWEDEN, FINLAND AND U.S. SWEDES TENDED TO EN-
DORSE NEED FOR ACTION ON COMMODITIES INCLUDING STOCKING
ARRANGEMENT AND PRODUCTION CONTROLS BUT OPPOSED
CONCEPT OF MULTILATERAL CONTRACTS. FINNS TOOK GENERALLY
MORE CRITICAL LINE THAN SWEDES AND STUCK LARGELY TO
POINTING OUT GAPS IN SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTATION. EC
COUNTRIES AVOIDED SPEAKING, PARTLY ON GROUNDS OF LATENESS
OF DOCUMENTATION, AND DUE TO FACT THAT THERE APPEARS TO
BE LITTLE ENTHUSIASM TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED PROGRAM OR
SPECIFIC PARTS THEREOF AT THIS TIME AT LEAST. RETICENCE
ALSO DUE TO DIFFERENCES WITHIN EC ON BASIC APPROACH.

4. U.S. STATEMENT, FOLLOWING MENTION OF LATENESS IN
RECEIVING DOCUMENTATION AND CAUTION THAT U.S. REMARKS
WERE ONLY PRELIMINARY SINCE FULL REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS
HAD BEEN IMPOSSIBLE, TOOK LINE PRAISING WORK OF
SECRETARIAT IN DIFFICULT TIMING SITUATION BUT INDICATING
THAT MATERIAL PRESENTED THUS FAR WAS INSUFFICIENT IN
DETAILING OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED
IN EVALUATING INTEGRATED PROGRAM AND KEY ELEMENTS
THEREOF. U.S. DELEGATE REITERATED SPECIFICALLY U.S.
RESERATIONS ABOUT PROPOSAL FOR A COMMON FUND AND U.S.
BELIEF THAT CONCEPT OF COMMON FUND, WHICH IS THE SEGMENT
OF THE PROGRAM WHICH THE SECRETARIAT APPEARS TO BE
PUSHING TO THE FORE, CANNOT BE PROPERLY CONSIDERED
BEFORE THE QUESTION OF TECHNIQUES, PRACTICALITY, AND
CONSEQUENCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL STOCKING ARRANGEMENT
HAS HAD FURTHER STUDY AND ELABORATION. U.S. STATEMENT
ALSO REJECTED IDEA EXPOUNDED BY SECRETARIAT THAT FUNCTION
OF INTERNATIONAL STOCKS COULD BE USED FOR PURPOSES OF
PRICE SUPPORT AS WELL AS REDUCTION OF PRICE FLUCTUATIONS.
TONE OF U.S. STATEMENT, WHILE EXPRESSING U.S. SKEPTICISM
OF INTEGRATED PROGRAM AND POINTING OUT DEFICIENCIES OF
STUDIES PROVIDED BY SECRETARIAT ALSO REITERATED U.S.
WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION
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PAGE 03 GENEVA 05841 231430Z

TO COMMODITY PROBLEMS, IN AN EFFORT TO DETERMINE THE
PRECISE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM AND TO SEEK BROADLY BASED
SOLUTIONS.

5. UP TO THIS POINT NO DRAFT RESOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN
INTRODUCED FOR DISCUSSION NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY
INDICATION OF ATTEMPT TO PUT THROUGH ANY STRONG
RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNCTAD TDB FOR REFERENCE TO UN 7TH

SPECIAL SESSION. PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT REPORT
OF MEETING MOST LIKELY TO TAKE FORM OF SERIES OF
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES AS WELL AS
DIRECTION GUIDANCE TO THE SECRETARIAT IN PREPARATION
FOR THIRD AND FINAL DECEMBER MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE
IN ITS EIGHTH SESSION. DALE

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